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ABSTRACT

This document is a guide for observing classrooms and classroom teaching in nongraded primary schools. The guide was developed to assess classroom teaching as distinguished from teaching the special area of art, music, etc. Twenty-three items are included in the instrument, which are subsumed under six major headings: I. Identifying Individual Differences; II. Pacing Instruction; III. Materials of Instruction Available; IV. Library Services; V. Adjusting Learning Time; and VI. Classroom Organization. Instructional practices illustrating each category are provided to aid the observer. Directions for the use of the guide are given, and how to complete the rating sheet provided is indicated. (DB)

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## PURPOSE

Nongraded Primaries in Action is a guide for observing classrooms and classroom teaching in nongraded schools. The guide was developed to assess classroom teaching as distinguished from teaching in the special area of art, music, etc. The guide should permit one to determine the prevalence of nongradedness and the presence of graded practices in nongraded classes.

Twenty-three items are included in the instrument. They are subsumed under six major headings. Instructional practices illustrating each categaroy are provided to aid the observer. Below is an outline of the guide's content.

I. IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

- A. Identifying for Reporting
- B. Identifying by Class Accomplishments
- C. Identifying by Group Progress
- D. Identifying by Individual Assessments

II. PACING INSTRUCTION

- A. Textbooks
- B. Group Accomplishments
- C. Individuals within the Groups
- D. Individual Accomplishments

III. MATERIALS OF INSTRUCTION AVAILABLE

- A. Single Graded Adopted Textbooks
- B. Textbooks from Earlier Levels
- C. Textbooks from Advanced Levels
- D. Diversified Materials

IV. LIBRARY SERVICES

- A. No Classroom Libraries
- B. Limited Classroom Libraries
- C. Diversified Classroom Libraries

V. ADJUSTING LEARNING TIME

- A. Fixed Schedules
- B. Adjustments to Complete Assignments
- C. Completing Assignments at Individual Rates
- D. Adjusting to Abilities

VI. CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

- A. Group Instruction
- B. Limited Grouping by Subjects
- C. Flexible Grouping
- D. Spontaneous Grouping

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## DIRECTION FOR USE

As each classroom is visited, lesson or learning activities will be in progress. The curriculum has been intentionally divided into subject areas. This division permits the locating of the portions of the curriculum where nongrading has taken place.

In using the guide, first indicate the area of the curriculum in which instruction was observed. This is done by checking the appropriate curriculum area. If, during the observation, more than one subject is taught, check these areas.

While observing look for practices found under each of the six broad headings. When a practice typifying one indicated in Non-graded Primaries in Action is located, place a check in the appropriate box. An illustration will clarify this procedure.

> You are observing a second level or second grade class. The class has been divided into three arithmetic groups. One group is working on material to develop number concepts. They count three animals in a picture and write the number 3. A second group practices addition combinations ($_{+3}$, $_{+2}$ etc.) A third group is working ( 1 2 )
> on identification of fractions. They put a blue X on the one-half piece of a pie, a green X on the one-fourth piece of a pie, etc. The teacher has taken one or two children from the second group and works with them on addition combinations.

The above illustrates pacing instruction by individuals within the groups and a check (✓) would be placed by Item II, C. on the rating sheet.

During your observation it may not be possible to see the exact activities used as illustrations.

## GATHERING DATA

(Checks should appear in each of the six divisions of the rating sheet for Nongraded Primaries in Action.) It may not be possible to see the practice in operation during your stay in any one classroom. However, you may gather ecidence that practice is part of the classroom procedure by looking at the bulletin boards, examining children's notebooks or workbooks, teacher's planbooks, children's work-folders, and the like. Do not substitute teachers' statements for tangible evidence. Avoid using overall subjective impressions as a basis for completing the rating form: rely on discernible evidence.

I. IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES (continued)

A. Identifying for Reporting

Example: Teachers keep records of students' grades on tests. Rank books may contain average scores. Test results appear to be used more for reporting purposes than identifying individual learning. Individual childrens' folders contain an array of typical class work and standard data. There is no indication that individual assessments of strengths or weaknesses have been made.

B. Identifying by Class Accomplishments

Example: Class scores on standardized measures are calculated. Improvement in performance is seen as class improvement. Class analysis sheets from standardized tests are more in evidence than individual assessments.

C. Identifying by Group Progress

Example: The teacher plans work for each group in her class. When the group completes the work planned new assignments are developed. End of unit tests are given as each group completes the unit. Evaluation is of total group success rather than individual accomplishment.

D. Identifying by Individual Assessments

Example: The teacher has the results of diagnostic tests. She records systematically the skills mastered by children and those yet to be mastered. She has records of children's learning problems and strengths. The records are qualitative rather than quantitative. It is more than simply recording the number of pages read in a book or the number of books read in a series. Her records attempt to pinpoint the exact nature of the child's learning accomplishments.

II. PACING INSTRUCTION

A. Textbooks

Example: Most children work on assignments from the same page in the same textbook.

II. PACING INSTRUCTION (continued)

The teacher or a child reads aloud from the textbook while the rest of the class follow in their books.

The proportion of the text completed approximates the proportion of the school year passed. (In December the class would be about 1/3 through the text.)

B. Group Accomplishments

Example: Groups within the class are working on a common assignment. The teacher moves from group to group checking progress, aiding the group with difficulties and suggesting courses of action. Assignments are group assignments and success is group success.

One group may list all the words in the list of new words which have long vowel sounds. Another group may be locating all the words in a story that describe nouns. The success of the group is evaluated. The teacher asks one child from the group to read the list developed by the group. Individual contributions to the total group product are not identified.

C. Individuals within the Groups

Example: The class is divided into groups and group assignments are made. Some children are segregated from the group for individual teacher help while the rest of the group continues to work on the assignment. The children segregated from the group are working to catch up with the group or master a skill. Generally these children are always in the lowest part of the group.

D. Individual Accomplishments

Example: Children are working on a variety of learning activities. Some children work from different pages in an arithmetic textbook; other children work from different textbooks at different grade levels in the same subject; still others are working on ditto sheets the teacher has prepared. The emphasis is on the individual, not the class or a group within the class.

III. MATERIALS OF INSTRUCTION AVAILABLE

A. Single Graded Adopted Textbooks

Example: A graded textbook is provided each child in each subject. The publisher's grade designation corresponds to the grade or level observed. Co-basal textbooks on the same grade level may supplement instruction in the adopted text to provide additional practice at the same level of instruction.

B. Textbooks from Earlier Levels

Example: Textbooks designated from earlier grades are used for instruction along with the textbook graded for the grade or level observed. Some third graders use second grade arithmetic workbooks or texts. Books for higher grades are not used.

C. Textbooks from Advanced Levels

Example: Textbooks graded for grades above the grade observed are in use along with the textbook graded for the grade or level observed. No books graded for grades below the one observed are used.

D. Diversified Materials

Example: Children work from textbooks for the grades above and below the grade observed as well as materials graded for the class observed.

IV. LIBRARY SERVICES

A. No Classroom Libraries

Example: Classrooms do not have libraries. A small collection of textbooks from various publishers, a few copies of "Golden books," etc. may be on hand. However, the collection does not seem to be deliberately assembled and organized.

B. Limited Classroom Libraries

Example: Classroom libraries have books at the same reading level as for class observed. The collection is primarily on the topics studied by the class as a whole.

III. MATERIALS OF INSTRUCTION AVAILABLE (continued)

C. Diversified Classroom Libraries

Example: A large collection of books, not restricted to one level and covering many topics is on hand. The range of subjects covered by the collection is not restricted to any one subject area or any one topic.

V. ADJUSTING LEARNING TIME

A. Fixed Schedules

Example: The day is divided into learning periods. A plan for the day may be placed on the board or the teacher may move the class through the "periods" for learning without writing the daily schedule on the board. Reading may take place from 9:00 to 9:45. Writing from 9:45 to 10:00, Art from 10:00 to 10:30. etc. All work must be completed within the time allotted.

B. Adjustments to Complete Assignments

Example: Assignments are for the class. Children completing assignments, check their work, sit quietly until the rest of the class has finished, take a library book from their desk and read, or take a piece of drawing paper and begin to draw.

C. Completing Assignments at Individual Rates

Example: The days assignments for the class are written on the board. When the children finish assignments in one subject they begin work on the next subject. The teacher may walk about the classroom to check on accomplishments and give help with the assignment.

D. Adjusting to Abilities

Example: A flexible schedule for the day is developed. Learning goals are set and the learning activities developed. Time is set aside for children to work on skills as well as work on individual interests. The day is not organized around subjects. Not every subject is taught every day.

VI. CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

A. Group Instruction

Example: The entire class is treated as one group. Furniture is not arranged for small group instruction.

VI. CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION ( continued)

B. Limited Grouping by Subjects

Example: Grouping for instruction takes place only in one or two areas of the curriculum. Groups are "set" and generally membership is fixed and unchanging. At other times the lessons are directed to the entire class. Any arrangement of furniture is to facilitate instruction during the period set aside for group instruction.

C. Flexible Grouping

Example: Skills being developed determine the size and composition of the group. In one lesson small groups work with the teacher. In the following lesson the size and the composition of the group changes. The same children are not always together in each group.

D. Spontaneous Grouping

Example: One or two children may be using individual filmstrip viewers, a few children may be working from an encyclopedia or a dictionary, some children may be designing science experiments, etc. Learning activities are individualized and the groups are formed spontaneously.

# NONGRADED PRIMARIES IN ACTION

District: _____ School _____

Teacher: _____ Grade or Level _____ Graded _____ Nongraded _____

Observer: _____ Date _____ Time started _____ Time finished _____

I. IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

| | SPELLING | READING |
|---|---|---|
| A. No Identification | | |
| B. Identifying by Class Accomplishments | | |
| C. Identifying by Group Progress | | |
| D. Identifying by Individual Assessments | | |

II. PACING INSTRUCTION

| | |
|---|---|
| A. Textbooks | |
| B. Group Accomplishments | |
| C. Individuals within the Grouping | |
| D. Individuals Accomplishments | |

III. MATERIALS OF INSTRUCTION AVAILABLE

| | |
|---|---|
| A. Single Graded Adopted Textbooks | |
| B. Textbooks from Earlier Levels | |
| C. Textbooks from Advanced Levels | |
| D. Diversified Materials | |

IV. LIBRARY SERVICE

| | ARITH. | READ. |
|---|---|---|
| A. No Classroom Libraries | | |
| B. Limited Classroom Libraries | | |
| C. Diversified Classroom Libraries | | |

V. ADJUSTING LEARNING TIME

| | |
|---|---|
| A. Fixed Schedules | |
| B. Adjustments to Complete Assignments | |
| C. Completing Assignments at Individual Rates | |
| D. Adjusting to Abilities | |

VI. CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

| | |
|---|---|
| A. Group Instruction | |
| B. Limited Grouping by Subjects | |
| C. Flexible Grouping | |
| D. Spontaneous Grouping | |

NONGRADED PRIMARIES IN ACTION

District: _____ School _____

Teacher: _____ Grade or Level _____ Graded _____ Nongraded _____

Observer: _____ Date _____ Time started _____ Time finished _____

Lesson observed: Reading _____ Arithmetic _____

I. IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

- A. Identifying for Reporting
- B. Identifying by Class Accomplishments
- C. Identifying by Group Progress
- D. Identifying by Individual Assessments

II. PACING INSTRUCTION

- A. Textbooks
- B. Group Accomplishments
- C. Individuals within the Grouping
- D. Individual Accomplishments

III. MATERIALS OF INSTRUCTION AVAILABLE

- A. Single Graded Instructional Materials
- B. Instructional Materials from Earlier Grades
- C. Instructional Materials from Advanced Grades
- D. Diversified Instructional Materials

IV. LIBRARY SERVICES

- A. No Classroom Library
- B. Limited Classroom Library
- C. Diversified Classroom Library

V. ADJUSTING LEARNING TIME

- A. Fixed Schedule
- B. Adjustments to Complete Assignments
- C. Completing Assignments at Individual Rates
- D. Adjusting to Abilities

VI. CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

- A. Whole Class Instruction
- B. Limited Grouping by Subjects
- C. Flexible Grouping
- D. Spontaneous Grouping